

## 58. Dissecting Normal



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**With Your Host**

**Dara Tomasson**

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## 58. Dissecting Normal

Not really sure if you will ever figure out this whole-body relationship thing, so, you end up numbing out with eating, scrolling, or shopping. I have such great news for you because this episode is going to uncover how to create a normal relationship with your body. I'm Dara Tomasson, and this is weight loss for quilters episode 58, Dissecting Normal.

Did you know you could lose weight and keep it off for good? After 25 years of hiding behind my quilts, I have finally cracked the code for permanent weight loss, and I've lost 50 pounds without exercise or counting calories. I'm Dara Tomasson, professional quilter turned weight and life coach, where I help quilters just like you, create a life they love by losing weight and keeping it off for good. Let's jump into today's episode.

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Let's jump into today's episode.

Welcome to episode 58. How fun is that? I want you to ask yourself: what is your normal, when it comes to your relationship with food and you? So, I'm going to ask you some questions. Do you worry about what other people think. Do you put on an outfit and look at yourself in the mirror in several different angles?

Do you second guess your outfit? So, when you're walking out of the room, do you kind of double-check and maybe you end up just saying, "no, I'm not going to go to the wedding or go to an event because you're just so exasperated by everything."

What is your relationship with food and your body? Do you spend a lot of time binging, so you'll eat like a bunch, or you have a lot of resistance and then you just explode. You can't avoid it anymore. And then you just end up grabbing the ice cream and, and eating it, all of it. Like, what is your relationship?

And so, what I want to offer is that whatever you're doing right now, that is your normal, that is normal to you because that normal is something you do every day. It's just normal and common, kind of like what we were talking about in the most recent episode 57, and your journey, like whatever your life is like, that is your path.

So, today's episode is talking about discovering what you are doing and why you're doing it. And I have an incredible way of looking at it in a different light and it comes from a book called *More Than a Body*, by Lindsay, and Lexi Kite.

And it's a really different way of looking at body image. And so, I'm going to walk you through the three different pitfalls when you have a body disruption. That's one of those moments where someone invites you to go swimming and you freak out or whatever that is.

So, before I dive into that and help us discover or uncover what your normal is, and then like discover what the normal is now, and then really establish what you want

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your new normal to be. I have got to share this celebration from one of my clients and. I'm just so pleased that this is her story.

And I want you to know that, you know, she has lost 50 pounds. She still has 50 more pounds that she wants to lose. And she hasn't been able to lose this last 50. She's been maintaining the 50 pounds for almost eight months, maybe nine. I don't think it's going to be much longer. She's on her way to losing again because she reported that she just had her anniversary weekend, on Independence Day. We call it Canada day.

She just had so much fun enjoying herself. She wasn't thinking about her weight all the time. She wasn't obsessing about it. And she said that she understands that weight goes up and down 10 pounds. That gave her so much freedom.

She went out for her anniversary dinner; she enjoyed all the food. They even had ice cream. She was up three quarters of a pound the next morning. And she didn't worry, she didn't stress out about it at all. She also said that she's having so much fun on the weekend and so much of it was not focused on the food they had.

She didn't keep thinking about food. It wasn't always on her mind. And they had a family barbecue and she had a hamburger, but she said: "no bun for me, thanks." And she didn't feel guilty. She didn't feel bad. This is my favorite part of what she said.

She said, I am so proud of myself too. I am more comfortable in acknowledging my gifts without feeling like I'm bragging. This is huge for her. And I know that will be huge for you when you get to that point. And it has taken her almost two years to get to that point. And I am so thrilled because now she can just live her life without having to worry about that.

I love the celebration. Just like all the celebrations and I am so proud of the women in Love Yourself Thin. I always call them my "braves" because it is super brave to face a challenge.

You have been in shame and hiding for so long and you don't need to do that anymore. And it's so exciting.

So let me go into this book and it's called, More Than a Body. If you want to Google, it, it's a fabulous book, and I watched a TED talk.

The author talked about how, when she was young, she used to be a swimmer. She loved swimming, but she was very uncomfortable in her swimming suit. She was uncomfortable when people looked at her. And so, she quit swimming, even though she loved it. She never really solved it until later in life. At 21, she had a moment, and you can watch the TED talk, but I'm going to describe some of the work they do.

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And it's really refreshing to look at it in this way, but here are some questions. So, she asked positive body image isn't believing your body looks good. It is knowing your body *is* good, regardless of how it looks. And so, they talk about your body is an instrument, not an ornament. And the instrument is, you can do whatever you want.

Those of you who are quilters, you use your body to cut fabric, use rotary cutters, you use sewing machines, use an iron, you use rulers. We make food with our hands. We do all sorts of things.

Is it just to look good in the world? And I really want you to take away that concept. Like you have to be a certain way. You have to look a certain way to have a certain worth. And, here are some questions from the book ... how do you feel about you? Have you ever stayed home from a social activity or other opportunity because of the concern about how you looked? Have you ever passed judgment on someone because of how they looked or dressed? Have you ever had difficulty concentrating on a task because you were self-conscious about your appearance?

So, I'm fairly positive that we can all say yes to all of these questions at, in some form or the other. And what I really loved was, she talked about how we can have these body image disruptions.

And so, for example, someone invites you to go swimming, or someone invites you to a wedding that can be a moment where you can have three different reactions. And the first reaction is that you can sink into shame. And so, if you're sinking into shame, that can be self-harm.

You could have an eating disorder, like bulimia, make yourself throw up or deprive yourself of food. So going to anorexia-- it's some really destructive way of trying to get out of the problem. The second form that you could possibly go to is what she calls it the comfort zone. So, the comfort zone, is kind of like you're floating above the water and you either are hiding or you're trying to fix the problem.

And so, fixing would be, getting Botox or, getting lipo or, maybe even wearing something uncomfortable on your body, like a girdle or something. And then hiding of course is just not showing up for life. Just not going to the party, just not going to the wedding. And so, what happens is you don't actually solve the real problem and you kind of adapt your life to a life that doesn't really feel like how you want it to feel, but you don't feel like you have any other options.

Or you can go to the third approach and that's, what's called body image resistance. So, body image, resilience and resilience really mean, you go to the places where you have shame and blame, and then you're able to look at the tough things about it and you can learn more. So, you actually face your fear.

And you work through it. And that's what my whole Love Yourself Thin process is. It's like cleaning out your closet, cleaning out your storage, and being able to go through all those bins ... all that stuff that feels really heavy, and it feels really hard.

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And the more that you're willing to work through the pile of stuff that you've been collecting, the freer you feel. Who doesn't feel amazing after a purge, right? But when you're purging, it feels terrible. It's stressful. You aren't sure if you're doing it right. You might have regret, or you might have given something away that you didn't really want to give away.

All of that is it's uncomfortable and that's okay. That's, what's called resilience. And so, in this episode I wanted to share some ways of how to work with yourself. So, first of all, I just want to share a disclaimer. If you are having self-harm, if you are having anorexia or bulimia, or you're turning to alcohol or something that is abusive, I highly recommend you go see a trained therapist.

That is my recommendation. You can come and talk to me, and we can kind of see the severity of it, but I definitely recommend that would be a really good choice for you. And then once you have more of a handle, then of course, you're welcome to come to Love Yourself Thin. Then number two, if you're spending a lot of time hiding or fixing in that comfort zone, definitely love yourself.

Then we'll help you. Because what it's doing is hiding is because you feel shame. It's still with shame, but it's also fueled by blame. Like if my mom would've spoken nicer to me, I wouldn't have all these problems. If I lived in a higher economic class, we would've had better food and I would've had better opportunities, or even if I wasn't so rich growing up, we wouldn't have had all these decadent foods, and then I wouldn't be also overweight ... or whatever, whatever the story is, that's what blame is. And we can work on that and then the body image resilience. So, learning how to look at that shame and blame and work through that.

That is definitely the work that we do. So, let's go back to looking at what's normal. What do most people think is normal? So, when you stop and observe this, you realize that it's really messed up. So have you noticed that if you've lost weight, people will say, "oh, you've lost weight." And that's supposed to be something that's good.

I have a really funny story about this. So, my sister, when her youngest went to school, my sister joined a swim team and a water polo team. And so, she just had this new freedom that she hadn't had. For so long, because she had been raising kids and she just got really into it and she lost a bunch of weight and her neighbors were snowbirds, so they were gone for six months and when they got back, they saw my sister and they thought that she had cancer because she had lost this weight.

And, so they went over and, and as they asked, they actually thought either my brother-in-law got remarried or my sister had cancer, they weren't quite sure. I mean, their eyesight, you know ... they were looking from afar. So, in that case, if we had said, "oh, you have you lost weight," they thought that was a bad thing.

And so, it just shows us that the circumstance is the number of pounds that you are, or the number of pounds that you lost. That's just a fact, we all get to decide what we

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want to think about it. Whatever is normal in our brain, so because we never say, “did you gain weight?”

Another example I heard was when we think about what's normal, so people will say, “When I'm pregnant, I don't really care if it's a boy or girl, I just want them to be healthy.”

Well, what is that saying about the baby? So, if they're not healthy they are not good and worthy? So, there are some other questions, like, is it normal to eat when you want comfort? Is it actually solving the problem to eat food when you want comfort?

When really, if you want comfort, what really brings comfort is the connection you have with yourself. The words that you say to yourself, how you talk to yourself. There's another one that I notice a lot with my clients. We talk about snacking, and I say that snacking is always a social event. So, it means you want to have a connection.

And so, you're turning to the food for that connection, rather than connecting with yourself, or you pick up the phone and call someone and actually have a conversation. We see this happening on Facebook and Instagram. We want to have a connection, but we turn to Instagram or Facebook instead. That's not a true connection. You're not truly connecting with people. And so that's like a false pleasure.

So, I want you to think about what messages you got when you were a kid. And going back to those questions that I had asked, from the book was how do you feel about your body?

Have you ever stayed home from a social activity? Have you ever passed judgment on someone because of how they looked or dressed? Have you ever had difficulty concentrating on a task because you were self-conscious about your appearance? So, I want you to learn more about food and you. You are more than a body.

I want you to notice your thoughts, just notice them and then decide, “Is that helping me? Does that feel good?” I know that growing up, I heard a lot of different messages about people who were overweight. Do I want to keep them, or do I want to just let them go? Do I want to have compassion for those people? Do I want to just let them be them and take care of themselves?

Another suggestion is to monitor what messages you take in. What accounts are you following? What companies do you buy from? Are you looking at a company that has lots of different images, and people who are all different shapes and sizes who are all different races, who are all different genders?

Are there people on your Instagram or Facebook that you follow that you get triggered by, you think, oh, those people aren't real. How can they be so perfect? I think that's one of my favorite things about me on Instagram or Facebook, because I

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am clearly a 48-year-old mom who's had five babies and I don't use filters and I don't airbrush anything. I definitely haven't shown a picture of my belly and the flabby skin because I generally don't ever wear anything that reveals that. So anyways, that is something that you can decide to do for yourself is monitor what you take in.

What is the messaging you take in? And when you do take that in, what are you making that mean for yourself? So, one of the messages that came out from Lindsay and Lexi Kite's book, was this: they talk about this positive body image and they said that you don't need to feel beautiful to feel good.

And I think that sometimes when we keep saying, "oh, you're so beautiful, you're so beautiful." It's actually skewing the message of in order to feel like you're a good human or a valid person, you need to be beautiful. And sure, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but if you don't truly feel like you're beautiful and you have this thought that you have to be beautiful to feel good, then you're going to be in trouble.

We need to start living inside of our body and being comfortable with it. And then we don't need to worry about what other people think. And this is exactly how the Love Yourself Thin philosophy is, and it kind of goes along with the example I gave of my client, who had so much fun on the weekend. One of the things that she said was, she wasn't focused on food to have fun. She realized that even though she hasn't gotten to her ideal weight, she could enjoy her life. This is what I'm talking about. I think about my, long arm, how much I love my long arm. I really take good care of her. I dust my long arm. I make sure my long arm has oil. I make sure my long arm has a nice sharp needle. I take really good care of my long arm. I love my kids. I take really good care of my kids. I make sure that I always have food in the fridge, and I have food in the pantry.

I always make sure they have clean clothes. I always make sure they have shoes that fit. I always make sure that if they are sad or disappointed or upset, I will spend time with them. I will make sure that they feel loved.

And so, when you start learning to love your body, and you realize that your body is an instrument, not an ornament, that even though you have wrinkles, and even though your hair is starting to get grizzly. It's kind of funny like that ... like grizzle kind of hair. I don't know if that's the word, but my body is kind of sagging and changing.

I just say, "hey body, you're doing such a good job. You've been working hard for me for 48 years. I love how you just get up every morning. I love how you pump blood and you do all these amazing things. I love how I can just write and write for hours, and you just know what to do. I love you body. I'm so grateful. I sit on this chair, and you just support me."

So, the more that you speak nicely and kindly to your body, the more you take care of your body. And then the less you put a bunch of food in there and you try to numb yourself. That is normal.

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I spoke about intuitive eating a few episodes ago, and I talked about how my clients who go six weeks without flour and sugar, they start becoming really sensitive to how sugary things are and, their body is more balanced.

They're learning to be intuitive in their eating. They're really learning to home in on, "hey, I really could use like a steak, right?" So, it's telling them their body needs certain minerals and certain nutrients. "Hey, my body could really use some broccoli right now." It's saying like the body's saying, "yeah, like I really need that thing."

So, this episode is really a fun exercise for you. And so, the worksheet will be really helpful because it has the three levels of the body image. If a body image disruption happens, if you go to the sinking into shame, if you go to the comfort zone, or if you're going to go into the body image resilience, all of these exercises are in the worksheet.

Alright ladies, you're amazing. I am so happy that you're here on this podcast. Just as a reminder, if you're listening to this podcast in real time, we are going through all of these classes on Mondays in August of 2022, and I invite you to join with us in, Love Yourself Thin.

If you want to ask me any question, I'm always here for you. You can just go to my website or click on the link and book a call with me. I can't wait to hear how much of this podcast has helped you. I always love to hear from you. Take care of everyone. Bye-bye.

Thanks for listening to Weight Loss for Quilters. If you want more info, please visit [www.daratomasson.com](http://www.daratomasson.com) See you next week.

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